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C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 000356

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SUBJECT: GOVERNOR IN TROUBLE-RIDDEN ANBAR PROVINCE HELD
HOSTAGE

(U) Classified by POL Counselor Robert Ford for reasons
1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary: The Governor of Anbar Province, perhaps the most violence-plagued part of Iraq, feels isolated and trapped in his office while he tries to secure the release of his three kidnapped sons. The Governor doubts he can trust either the police chief or the Iraqi National Guard Commander in Anbar. The Governor has talked of resigning as part of a bargain to gain his sons' release, but he told the Interior Minister that he will stay. Even if he does, the credibility of Iraqi security forces in Anbar has taken a hit. End Summary.

12. (C) Anbar Provincial Governor Burgis' three eldest sons were kidnapped on the night of July 28. Iraqi police guarding the Governor's residence were either ineffectual in defending the Governor's family or complicit in the commission of the crime. Iraqi police and other security forces have since claimed they have no evidence to follow, according to the State Department liaison officer embedded with military forces in Ramadi.

13. (C) In the days since the kidnapping, Burgis seems to be in touch with the kidnappers, who appear to be linked terrorist groups, and will meet their demands for his sons' release. An aide to the Governor said that the motive for the kidnapping appears to be forcing the Governor's resignation. This aide also claims that the Governor and he both believe the Police Chief and the Iraqi National Guard Commander are complicit in the kidnapping. Burgis has met with US military personnel and the Ramadi State Department liaison officer, but has shared little information concerning the whereabouts and identity of the kidnappers. Burgis even went so far as to ask the Marine Commanding General for help on paying the ransom, according to the liaison officer.

14. (C) In the midst of this, the Governor has basically stopped work. Since there is no Deputy Governor in Anbar, the functions of the Governor's post are not being fulfilled.

15. (C) On August 1, ADCM and PolCouns met with Deputy Prime Minister Salih to urge the interim Government to respond quickly. Salih said the Interior Minister would visit Anbar on August 2. He acknowledged that the Government might need to find a new Governor, but no candidate immediately came to mind. He also cautioned that the Governorate Council would probably have to elect the new governor. PolCouns asked if the IIG could invoke the new state security law to enable the IIG to make the appointment of a governor. Salih responded that it would be very difficult to utilize the law in Anbar now. According to the DPM, the IIG had not prepared public opinion for such a step.

16. (C) On the evening of August 2, Minister of Interior Felah Naqib arrived in Ramadi and met the Governor. Naqib urged Anbar officials to send a delegation to Baghdad on Saturday, August 7 to discuss the situation further. Deputy PM Salih told A/DCM on August 2 that Governor Burgis told the Interior Minister Naqib that he will not resign.

17. (C) On August 3, the Ramadi liaison officer reported that the Anbar Provincial Council Vice-President told him on August 2 that a Sheikh Nassir of the Fahdawi tribe has proposed new candidates for the governor and empty provincial council slots. The names proposed allegedly all are from the Fahdawi tribe (to which the local Iraqi National Guard commander also belongs) and the al-Wani tribe (to which the Police Chief belongs).

8.(C) Comment: Anbar has a difficult security environment and now its local government is in a state of crisis, with the Governor unable to trust those around him and unable to function. Although Burgis told Interior Minister Naqib that he will hang on, our sense is that he is looking for a way out of Ramadi in any case (On July 23, Burgis already told visiting Polcouns that he wanted to quit). Even if the Anbar Governor stays, his ability to function is at question amidst the antagonism he confronts with some of the tribes. The credibility of the Iraqi security forces in Anbar also is in question. End Comment.

Negroponte